N° 8

A

SERMON

Preached before the

Incorporated SOCIETY

FOR THE

Propagation of the Goſpel in Foreign Parts;

AT THEIR

ANNIVERSARY MEETING

IN THE

Pariſh-Church of St. *Mary-le-Bow,*

On FRIDAY, *February* 18, 1736.

Clagget BY
NICOLAS Lord Biſhop of *St. DAVIDS.*

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MDCCXXXVII.

Bow-Veſtry. *February* 18, 173

At the Anniverſary Meeting of the Socie
for the Propagation of the Goſpel i
Foreign Parts.

AGreed, That the Thanks of th
SOCIETY be given to the Righ
Reverend the Lord Biſhop of *St. David*
for his Sermon Preached this Day befor
the SOCIETY, and that he be deſired to
Print the ſame.

David Humphreys, Secretary.

Acts XI. v. 18.

—— Then hath God alſo to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto Life.

IN the words of the text we find a declaration and acknowledgment made by ſome of the firſt Converts from *Judaiſm* both of the very beneficial nature of the Goſpel, and alſo of the great goodneſs of God in extending the benefit of it to ſo many. The occaſion of the words was this. We read at the cloſe of the foregoing Chapter, that, upon St. *Peter*'s preaching to *Cornelius* and his Company, *the Holy Ghoſt fell on all them that heard the word*, and that *on the Gentiles alſo was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghoſt.* v. 44. 45. Whereupon St. *Peter* baptizes them, alledging, that no man ought to *forbid water* to thoſe who had *received the Holy Ghoſt.* After this no ſooner was St. *Peter* come up to *Jeruſalem*, but thoſe *of the Circumciſion*, greatly offended with

what he had done, expoſtulated with him there upon, and tax'd him, as guilty of an unlawful and unjuſtifiable practice, in *going in to men uncircumciſed*, and familiarly converſing with them. v. 2. In order to juſtify himſelf, the holy Apoſtle thought it right to recite to them the whole hiſtory of the *Viſion*, which he had had from heaven, upon this very account; which concludes with theſe words, *What was I, that I could withſtand God?* as much as to ſay, "God having ſo plainly ſhewn me "what his pleaſure was in this matter, I could do "no otherwiſe than I did. That which we look "upon as the ſolemn Seal of our miſſion, and "the great confirmation of our Apoſtleſhip, was "the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt; and that having been allowed to the *Gentiles*, I muſt have "been guilty of downright diſobedience to God, "if I had made a ſcruple to receive them into "the Church, or had refus'd indifferently to "preach to, or converſe with them." Upon which it is ſaid in the verſe of which the text is part, that *when they heard theſe things, they held their peace and glorified God.* This was ſo ſtrong an Apology for himſelf, and ſo ſatisfactory an account of what he had done, that they could murmur at his conduct no longer, and immediately drop their objection againſt it: and not only ſo, but they chang'd their accuſation of the Apoſtle into a juſt acknowledgment of the infinite mercy and goodneſs

goodneſs of God; they found themſelves, as it were, forc'd and conſtrain'd to give due Glory to God, who had *alſo to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto Life.*

From which words of the believing *Jews*, in order to ſhow the great weight and moment of the work which this Society is engag'd in, and the great reaſon we have to proceed, with all zeal and diligence, in it, I purpoſe at preſent to ſpeak to theſe *four* things.

I. The Benefit or Bleſſing here expreſs'd to be beſtow'd, *Repentance unto Life.*

II. The Perſons it is beſtow'd upon, *The Gentiles.*

III. The Agreeableneſs of this Method of proceeding with the nature and attributes of God, and with the ſeveral declarations he has made to this purpoſe by his Prophets. And

IV. The great reaſon, that perſons already admitted to the Bleſſing of the Goſpel have to uſe their hearty endeavours, that it may be enjoyed by others as well as by themſelves.

I. I begin with the Bleſſing or Benefit here ſaid to be beſtow'd, *Repentance unto Life. Repentance* is the infinite and ineſtimable Goſpel Privilege, that Remedy, which the grace and mercy of God does, in and through *Jeſus Chriſt*, allow to ſinful

ful men; and the happy Conſequence of this being no leſs than Eternal *Life*, it is therefore ſtiled *Repentance unto Life*. As to the import of the word *Repentance*, the expreſſion in the *Greek* plainly ſignifies, a change of mind; and the Scripture ſenſe of the word implies ſomewhat more than that, and takes in beſides a thing, which naturally follows it, or is caus'd by it, *viz.* an alteration likewiſe of practice or behaviour, a changing or turning from one courſe or cuſtom of life to another. And the *Gentiles*, to whom *Repentance* is here ſaid to be *granted*, being accordingly to *caſt off their former Converſation*, as the Apoſtle calls it, to exchange their numerous feigned Deities for one living and true God, to forſake all their former Idolatrous and Prophane Rites, and to embrace the ſimplicity of the Goſpel, and to yield a willing and an uniform obedience to its precepts; the Bleſſed Effect of their doing This was to be no leſs than entitling them to *Life*, and it is therefore call'd *Repentance unto Life*. By *Life* here ſome indeed underſtand that preſent moſt bleſſed and deſirable ſtate and condition, in which ſinners are placed by *Repentance:* whereas before this they were in a ſtate of wretched darkneſs and miſery, no better than ſpiritually dead; and although they breath'd and walk'd up and down, and ſhow'd by their ſeveral actions and motions, that they had in them a principle of the

imal and sensitive life, yet could they not strict-
y and properly be said to live, as not living the
fe of Thinking and Rational beings; nay, so to-
lly were they immers'd in sin and error, that
eir life was little better, if not much worse, than
at of Brutes. But when God, by his Grace and
essed Spirit, had once enlightened their dark minds,
d acquainted them with the true knowledge of
mself, and their duties to him, and had brought
em to a conscientious steddy practice of Religion;
en, and not before, did their souls and spirits be-
in, as it were, to come to themselves, to revive and
ve, in the true and proper sense of doing so, *viz.* by
joying such a state and condition of life, as is
ost suitable and natural to Reasonable Beings (such
men are) and consequently most conducive to
eir Present Happiness. And this is undoubtedly
true and good notion of *Repentance unto Life*,
z. That *Repentance* is that, which brings men to
e like themselves, *i. e.* happily, and at ease, and
th comfort; which it was not possible for them
do, so long as they continued in their former
rse. For That was irregular, and disorderly,
unnatural; and whatsoever is so, is a certain
my to quiet, and utterly destructive of true sa-
ction. But still there can be no doubt but that
phrase has chiefly reference to that future most
ssed and Glorious State in the other world, to
ich *Repentance* doth lead and conduct us, by
rescuing

reſcuing and recovering us from the dominion
ſin and power of the Devil, by reſtoring us no
to the love and favour of God, and by prepari
us for Everlaſting *Life* and Happineſs with him
Heaven, and helping us to the attainment of
great a Bleſſing. I ſee no inconvenience in co
ſidering *Life* in this place in both acceptations, a
The Rational and Religious *Life*, which *Repe*
tance brings men to here, and that Bleſſed and I
mortal *Life*, to which upon their true *Repentan*
they are to be advanced hereafter. For they are
very near affinity to each other. *Life* conſider'd
the former ſenſe is the certain forerunner of *L*
conſider'd in the latter, and the latter is the u
doubted effect of the former; and a greater Bene
or Bleſſing than both of them together cannot
deſir'd or imagin'd by men, *viz.* Than to live w
that is, reaſonably and accountably, and like m
in this world, and to be eternally happy in t
next. Which being ſo, it much concerns us
conſider what I purpos'd to ſpeak to in the Sec
place, and that was, the Perſons on whom this
Gracious a Gift is ſaid to be *beſtow'd*. And hap
is it for us, happy for the whole race of mankin
that God has dealt out ſo great a Bleſſing with ſo
beral an hand. For,

II. We find that this Favour was not confi
as the *Jews*, upon the firſt promulgation of t
Gol

Goſpel, imagin'd it to be, to one people and nation, ſo that none beſides themſelves were to be partakers of it. It is acknowledg'd in the text by that very people, who were ſo remarkable for being partial to themſelves, and who vainly fancy'd, that God was ſo too, that *Repentance unto Life*, the greateſt Bleſſing, that Man had ever receiv'd from God, was *granted to the Gentiles*, as well as to themſelves. One of the main things, that made them ſo backward to believe this great truth, was this, That, in times paſt, and until then, to the *Jews*, and to them only, God had given the Right knowledge of himſelf, *ſhowing his word unto Jacob, and his ſtatutes and ordinances unto Iſrael*, laying before them ſundry precepts about Religion, acquainting them with the ways and means, whereby they might ſerve and worſhip him in an acceptable manner, *dealing with them*, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, ſo *as he did not with any other nation*, to whom he gave not the like *knowledge of his Laws*. But they are now convinced that *Repentance unto Life* was *alſo granted to the Gentiles*. By the term *Gentiles* the *Jews* underſtood all that were not of their own People, and Country and Religion. *Heathens* and *Nations* and *Gentiles* are Synonymous Expreſſions in Holy Scripture, as may be ſeen by the following texts, 1 *Sam.* viii. 20. *Pſal.* xliv. 2. and lxxix. 1. and by many other places. Theſe were the people, whom the *Jews*, in compariſon

of themſelves, greatly ſcorn'd and contemn'd *Stand by thy ſelf, come not near to me, for I am b lier than thou*, Iſa. lxv. 5. was the ſcornful la guage of the *Jew* to the poor neglected *Genti* And this diſtinction between the *Jews*, and the ther nations, or *Gentiles*, was alſo mightily ke up even in the time of our Saviour; nay, perha never was at a greater height than then. So litt aware were they, at the time of the appearance the Son of God, of the gracious errand, upo which he was ſent, which was to *break down t partition wall*, that was betwixt *Jews* and *Gentil* and to *make both one*, and to put the latter into an qual capacity with the former of obtaining the m deſirable of all Bleſſings, *viz.* The Favour of G and everlaſting Happpineſs. And this he did b his death, becoming, as the Scripture ſpeaks him, *a Ranſom for all. By the Blood of Chri* ſays the Apoſtle, *Eph.* ii. 11, 12, 13. were tho *made nigh, who ſometimes were far off*, even tho that *in time paſſed* were *Gentiles in the Fleſh, call* by way of contempt, the *Uncircumciſion*, th *were without Chriſt, aliens from the commonwea of Iſrael, and ſtrangers from the covenants of promi having no hope, and without God in the world.* An agreeably to this diſtinction is St. *Paul* alſo call *the Apoſtle of the Gentiles*, intimating, that he w to have little or no concern among the *Jews*, b was to be ſent abroad into the world, for the Co verſio

ſion of the Heathen Nations, and enlightning their dark minds with the bright beams of the Goſpel. So that the words of the text, if we take them according to the common conſtruction and interpretation of words ſpoken by *Jews* (and by *Jews*, we are to obſerve and remember, they were ſpoken) imply *two* things conſiderable;

1. The great and univerſal Extent of the Bleſſing, and

2. The ſeeming unfitneſs and want of Qualification of ſome of the Perſons, to whom it was extended.

1ſt. I ſay, here is implied the wide and univerſal extent of this Bleſſing, which ſeem'd to the *Jews* very ſtrange and wonderful. For they, as I before obſerved of them, thought, that God had confin'd himſelf and his Bounty wholly and ſolely to their Nation; and ſo they were fill'd with envy and diſcontent at but the firſt dawnings of Happineſs and Proſperity upon any other People. That the *Gentiles* ſhould be put upon the ſame level with themſelves, in point of Salvation, and have as fair and juſt hopes of it as they had, was a ſtep of the Divine Providence, which ſurpriz'd them, and which they could not eaſily perſwade themſelves to believe. In ſhort, That there ſhould be no προσωπολημψία, *no reſpect*, or *acceptance of perſons with God*, as they had all along vainly dreamt; That the *Jews* ſhould not continue to be, as they had

been in paſt ages, the only people in God's favou
but That all other Nations ſhould be gather'd un
them (for with them the *Gentiles* are equivalent t
to all the people, beſide themſelves, upon the fa
of the earth) and, That they too ſhould be part
kers of this great Bleſſing in the text; was ſuch
thought, as fill'd them indeed with wonder and
mazement. And yet, as the * excellent Writ
De Vocatione Gentium has obſerv'd, There was on
thing full as inſcrutable as this, and that is, Ho
they themſelves, How the *Jews*, in particula
came to be ſo diſtinguiſh'd from the reſt of th
world, as God's favourites; and this is what,
does not appear, that they ever took it into the
hearts at all to wonder at. But then,

2*dly*. Here was likewiſe a great difficulty an
ſtumbling-block in their way; and that was, Th
the people, on whom this favour was conferr'd
ſeem'd to them, on other accounts, ſo utterly un
qualified and unfit for it, beſides their not being
their ſtock and country. The *Gentiles* were pe
ſons, that wholly ſet themſelves againſt God, an
were addicted to all manner of Idolatry and Impie
ty; but, as for themſelves, they were an *Holy* and
Peculiar People, ſeparated from the world, an
devoted to God, and choſen to be his inheritance
which ſtuck ſo much in their minds, that ſome o
them, even after their Converſion to the *Chriſtia*
Faith

* Lib. 1. cap. 21.

Faith and Religion, thought it requiſite, amongſt other their former Rites and Uſages, ſtill to obſerve their wonted diſtance, and to abſtain from the converſation and communion of the *Gentile* Proſelytes, as looking upon them to be leſs pure and holy than themſelves, becauſe not originally of their own ſect and country. Nay, St. *Peter* himſelf, till convinc'd by the fore-mentioned Miracle, was of this mind. He was for keeping up the diſtinction of *clean* and *unclean*, till God himſelf commanded him to the contrary, and ſhow'd him, that he was reſolv'd to bear an equal regard and reſpect to all, of what race or climate ſoever they might be, that truly deſir'd to *fear him*, and to *work righteouſneſs*, as it is in the 35th verſe of the 10th chap. of the *Acts*.

But ſtill, notwithſtanding all this, as unlikely as this great Inſtance of God's Kindneſs to the *Gentiles* might ſeem on ſome accounts, yet were there, all things duly conſider'd, ſtrong Reaſons to induce the *Jews* to believe what St. *Peter* had told them concerning this matter; Reaſons, I ſay, making it highly credible, that ſome time or other this great Event would come to paſs. Which brings me to my next general head, wherein I was to conſider

III. The Agreeableneſs of this Method of proceeding with the nature and attributes of God, and with

with the ſeveral declarations he had made to this purpoſe by his Prophets.

Now they had great reaſon to think it highly probable, that even *to the Gentiles* God would *grant Repentance unto Life*, from the *three* following conſiderations;

1. From the contemplation of the boundleſs mercies and infinite goodneſs of God.

2. From the great and extraordinary need which the poor *Gentiles* had of this Bleſſing. And

3. From the particular expreſs Promiſes God has made to this purpoſe.

The time allow'd me will not permit me to ſpeak but very briefly to theſe particulars.

1. I ſay, The boundleſs mercies and infinite goodneſs of God, if the *Jews* had attended to that conſideration, might have rendred it to them highly probable, that God would allow *to the Gentiles alſo* acceſs to Eternal Salvation, or, in the words of the text, *Repentance unto Life*. These attributes (though inſeparable from the Idea of God) the *Jews* moſt plainly overlook'd and forgot: or elſe, they would never have gone about to confine God's Bleſſings, and monopolize, and engroſs his Favours wholly to themſelves; but muſt have argued, after this, or the like manner, with themſelves. "God being, as the very natural no-

"tion

tions of him do imply, a God of infinite and unlimited Kindneſs and Goodneſs, ſurely he will not continue to ſhine upon us only, but will dart the rays of his Bounty over all the world, and enlighten the now dark and gloomy corners of the earth. He is not, as *Eſau* ſuſpected of his Father *Iſaac*, furniſh'd only with one Bleſſing, but has an Unexhauſted Fountain and Treaſure of Bleſſings, and will therefore undoubtedly viſit other nations in his good time, with the ſame. For They likewiſe are the work of his hands as well as we; They too are of the ſame make, and have enſtamp'd upon them the like Divine and Heavenly Image with our ſelves; They are preſerv'd by the continual care of his Providence, and do already enjoy the common Bleſſings of this life, ſuch as health, and ſtrength, and ſun-ſhine, and rain. If therefore They are taken care of in theſe ſmaller matters, and theſe leſs conſiderable reſpects, ſurely he will much rather, in his own time and manner, provide for their more precious and valuable Intereſts, that are of infinitely greater moment and concern to them." But

2dly, The *Jews* might have argued the great probability of this, from the extraordinary great ſ the *Gentiles* had of the Bleſſing here ſpoken of; that, whether they conſider'd their Number, their Condition. As to their Number, they

were

were vaſtly the greater part of the world, the in-
habitants of *Judæa* being very few and inconſide-
rable, in compariſon of thoſe of all the earth be-
ſides; and yet That only, like *Goſhen* in *Egypt*, wa
a land of Light, whilſt other parts were ove
ſpread with Darkneſs and Ignorance: and this ſug
geſts to us alſo the conſideration of their Condi-
tion. They were, I ſay, in a ſtate of great Dark-
neſs and groſs Error and Ignorance, and in Bon
dage to the vileſt and moſt unnatural luſts, and a
manner of abominable impieties. And the mo
ſick, the more *need* had they of *a Phyſician*, ac
cording to our Saviour's own doctrine. Such ſi
ners, as they, had the greateſt need of all to b
call'd upon to *Repentance*. Upon both theſe ac
counts therefore we ſee their circumſtances wer
moſt deplorable, and, conſequently, ſuch as call
ſo much the louder to Heaven for mercy and pi
Merit and Deſert with God they could not in
deed pretend to any; but ſtill they were all of the
his creatures, his poor and helpleſs creatures, entire
ly dependant on him, and utterly loſt and ſunk
as to all Human means of recovery, in ſenſuality
and ſin. Their neceſſities were great, their indi
gencies and wants were preſſing and crying ou
for help; and theſe were ſuch things as could no
but plead ſtrongly for them, with a good and
merciful God, that they too might have a ſha
in the Bleſſed Redemption effected by the So

of God, and that they too might be admitted to the Privilege of having the Evangelical Doctrine of *Repentance unto Life* preach'd to them in his Name. And beſides

3dly. This was not an Inſtance of the Divine Goodneſs barely to be hoped for from thoſe lovely attributes of God, his mercy and loving kindneſs, but it is what God had promiſed and foretold he would do. Now therefore that the accompliſhment was begun, they could not but ſee the Prophecies relating to it, in a ſtronger and clearer light; and the Apoſtles, to aſſure the *Jews* of God's favour to the *Gentiles*, on many occaſions, as they well might, refer them to them. It was not only matter of fact, that God had call'd the *Gentiles*, but it was certain alſo, that he had engag'd and oblig'd himſelf, by many particular and expreſs Promiſes, to call in all people and nations, and to cauſe the great Benefit of the *Meſſiah*, when he was to come into the world, to be extended to all. It was the Word of God, and the Revelation of his purpoſe, that was the great foundation of mens hoping for a *Meſſiah* at all; and the ſame Divine Word, that made men look for his Bleſſing, foretold alſo, that it ſhould be an Univerſal one. *In thy ſeed* (ſaies God to *Abraham*, *Gen.* xxii. 18.) *ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed.* And *Gen.* xlix. 10. *Unto him, Shiloh* or the *Meſſiah ſhall the gathering of the people be.* We find

it ſaid in the 2d Pſalm (which is underſtood b
the learnedeſt *Jewiſh* Writers to have reference
the *Meſſiah) I will give thee the heathen for thi
inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth f
thy poſſeſſion.* Again ſaies *Iſaiah* (ch. ii. v. 2.)
ſhall come to paſs in the laſt daies (i. e. the daies
the *Meſſiah*) *that the mountain of the Lord's ho
ſhall be eſtabliſh'd in the top of the mountains, a
ſhall be exalted above the hills, and all nations ſh
flow into it.* And more ſtrongly yet ſaies the ſa
Prophet in another place (ch. ix. v. 2.) *The peo
that walked in darkneſs*, i. e. the whole Gent
world, *have ſeen a great light; they that dwelt
the land of the ſhadow of death, upon them hath
light ſhined.* In which laſt place the Prophet, f
of the Certainty of the event, by a figure famil
to the Sacred Oracles, ſpeaks of future things
the ſame manner, as if they were already accom
pliſh'd, and actually paſt and over. And thus
very thing which one Prophet ſpeaks of in the F
ture tenſe, as, *Iſaiah*, ch. lii. v. 10. *All the ends of
earth ſhall ſee the ſalvation of our God*, does an
ther Prophet, Pſalm xcviii. 3. expreſs yet in
ſtronger way, in the *Præterit*, *All the ends of
earth have ſeen the ſalvation of our God.* And,
greeably to theſe predictions of him, is our Savio
call'd *the deſire of all nations.* Hag. ii. 7. But
need not mention any more Prophecies to this p
poſe.

All that I ſhall further obſerve about theſe Prophecies, is, That there is hardly any one point, concerning which the Prophets have been more full in their predictions, than this of God's Calling of the *Gentiles:* and not only ſo, but the learned *Jews*, as is well known, both the ancient ones and the later of them, have underſtood the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament in this ſenſe; and if the *Jews* of the preſent generation be in the ſame way of thinking with *Maimonides* and the *Talmudiſts*, they doubtleſs expect at this day, that, when the *Meſſiah* ſhall come, the *Gentiles* ſhall learn from him the true Law, and be brought by him to *Repentance*.

From what has been already ſaid it is ſufficiently plain, that God's *granting to the Gentiles Repentance unto Life* (of which his giving them the Holy Ghoſt was an undeniable argument) was not only a proceeding, which, when revealed to men, muſt highly approve it ſelf to their Underſtandings, as every way worthy of a moſt kind and beneficent being, and induce them to *glorify God*, (which was the effect we ſee it had upon the believing *Jews* in this Chapter) but was likewiſe an Event, which the Scriptures had expreſſly foretold, and which the Truth and Faithfulneſs of God had engag'd him, in his own way and manner, and in his own good time, to bring about. And this leads me to the *fourth* and *laſt* thing I was to ſpeak to in this diſcourſe, and that was

IV. The great Reaſon, that perſons, already admitted to the Bleſſing of the Goſpel, have to use their hearty endeavours, that it may be enjoyed by others as well as by themſelves.

And here if God had not expreſſly ſignified to us his will in this caſe, as he has done in ſeveral places of Scripture, ſuch as, *Go and teach all Nations* —— *and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world*; and again, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Goſpel to every creature*; if we had not been aſſur'd by St. *Paul*, 1. *Tim.* ii. That it is the will of *God our Saviour*, that *all men* ſhould *be ſaved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth*; If *Paul* and *Barnabas* had not declared *Acts* xiii. 47. That *the Lord* had *commanded them* to *turn to the Gentiles*, and to preach that *word of God* to them, which the *Jews*, judging themſelves *unworthy of everlaſting Life* had put from them; which texts are all of them ſo many plain Indications, that *Chriſtians* ought not to ſit ſtill, but ever be forwarding the progreſs of the Goſpel, as they have opportunity of ſo doing: yet would Gratitude to our Lord and Saviour, and that Charity to the Souls of men, which the Goſpel is ever ſuppos'd to enkindle in us, ſtrongly move us to this work. In the *firſt* place, I ſay, Gratitude to our Lord and Saviour, who hath redeem'd us with his moſt precious blood, ſhould make us not only

pray

pray conſtantly, *That the kingdoms of the world may be the kingdoms of our Lord Chriſt*; and *That the kingdom of God may come*; but ſhould carry us yet farther, and make us, as, on the one ſide, highly pleas'd and delighted to ſee it flouriſhing and encreaſing, ſo, on the other, uneaſy and concern'd, whenever we ſee, either any of the Subjects of *Chriſt's kingdom* in danger of falling away from him, or others, (who might, would we but take the pains to gain them, become ſubjects of *his kingdom*) not ſo much as knowing *the Lord that bought them*, nor conſequently capable of *bringing* their *thoughts* and actions *to the obedience of Chriſt*. And in the *next* place, This is the greateſt Inſtance of Charity to man, that is poſſible. For if the Goſpel be the way to Eternal *Life*, the method of being entitled to and obtaining the glorious Rewards in Heaven, which God has promis'd to *Chriſtians*, as it aſſuredly is, and as it appears plainly to be, from the following and the like texts; *God hath given to us eternal Life*, ſaies the Apoſtle, 1. *John*, v. 11. *and that Life is in his Son*; again, *This is Life eternal that they know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt, whom thou haſt ſent*; and again, *This is the true God, and eternal Life*; If this, I ſay, be not only infallibly true, but it be certain too, that there is *no other* way than this to Eternal *Life*; If the ſame Scriptures that have told us, that *he that hath the Son hath Life*, have alſo told us, that *he that hath not the*

Son

Son hath not Life. 1. John, v. 12. If, Affirmativ
ly, the Belief of the Goſpel be *the way* to *Li*
and, Negatively, there be *no other way* beſide i
How great a Bleſſing and Reward, How valuable
Privilege and Advantage do we ſuffer men to wa
by letting them continue in Unbelief? But to t
it may be ſaid, with regard to the Infidel part
the world, *Ignoti nulla cupido.* As they have n
heard of the Joys of Heaven, ſo it is not to be ſu
poſ'd, that want of knowing the Goſpel can ca
in them any uneaſineſs. And indeed one ſort of u
eaſineſs it does not cauſe in them, not an uneа
neſs like that of the impenitent *Chriſtian*, w
can be no more ignorant of the greatneſs of t
happineſs to which he has forfeited his title, th
of the ſevere doom, which all *Chriſtians* know i
penitent ſinners muſt expect. But then we are
conſider, that the Rewards of the Goſpel are
great *Prize*, and to miſs of that *Prize* is a gr
loſs for any to ſuſtain, who might, if we ſo plea
have had an opportunity of obtaining it. In t
mean time, their being at preſent ſenſible, or not ſe
ſible, of their loſs, makes no manner of alteratio
as to the Truth and Reality of it. With regard
perſons who are in a Lethargy, whilſt they lie u
der the Power of their diſtemper, and are u
terly inſenſible of the badneſs of their own caſe,
cannot, becauſe they are ſo, be therefore ſaid
them, that they are well. No. By-ſtanders kn

contrary, and pity them, and if they have any manity, will endeavour to relieve them. Juſt ſhould *Chriſtians* act with regard to the *Gentile* rld. We know, and are aſſur'd from Scripture, particular, from the Epiſtles of St. *Paul)* how etched a ſtate and condition the Heathen world s in, at the time of the promulgation of the oſpel; a ſtate of darkneſs and ignorance; a ſtate ſin and wickedneſs; and, conſequently (which errible to think of) a ſtate of *Enmity with God*; ſtate of ſubjection and ſlavery to their bittereſt emy, *Satan*, from whoſe *net* or *ſnare* they could no means extricate themſelves, but, as the Scripe ſpeaks, were *taken captive by him at his will.* nd what reaſon have we to think, that, at this eſent time, it can fare better with any people, ho have not amongſt them the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, free them from theſe evils? Has not the comon enemy of mankind, now as formerly, the me frailties and corruptions of fallen man to work pon? Or has he, ſince the miſchief he did to our ſt parents, and, in them, to all of us, abated any ing of his inveterate hatred to our race? Can we magine that he is leſs active now, than he was in forer times, or that nature, unſupported by the helps the Goſpel, is abler now to defend herſelf aainſt his wiles and ſtratagems? This we cannot ink. Fact and experience ſhow us the contra-. Of this our Plantations and Colonies in *Ame-*

rica have before their eyes a convincing argumen
and by ſeeing the Groſſneſs and Ignorance, the Id
latry and Superſtition, the Savageneſs and Brutiſ
neſs of their neighbours the *Indians*, muſt be th
roughly convinced, how very poor and wretched
creature it is poſſible for man, when left to him
ſelf, to be. And much to be lamented would
the fate of our Countrymen ſettled near them,
inſtead of being able to civilize and convert the
and to bring them over *to the obedience of Chriſt*
glorious deſign, which it is to be hoped they w
never loſe ſight of) they ſhould find themſelves,
their new ſituation, not ſo much as able to ke
up among themſelves that ſenſe of the Religion
the Goſpel, which they brought with them fro
their mother-country, and ſhould be themſelves
the utmoſt danger of falling into downright He
theniſm.

It was a truly *Chriſtian* deſire to prevent ſo gre
and heavy a calamity from falling upon our ow
people, that chiefly and principally engag'd T
Society for propagating the Goſpel in Foreign Par
to turn their thoughts to eſtabliſh a *Chriſtian* M
niſtry amongſt them, and to furniſh them with
thoſe methods of inſtruction, which we here
home find to be ſo neceſſary amongſt our ſelv
This has made the members of this Society thi
it worth their while, not only to contribute t
wards the expence of it themſelves (which is th
ca

e of every one of its members) but to put them-
ves into a way of being regularly and conſtantly
orm'd, from time to time, of the ſtate of Re-
on in our Colonies, and, upon the accounts they
eive from them, to caſt about and project, how to
moſt uſeful to them in their Spiritual Concerns,
d to take all poſſible care, (in ſuch of our Planta-
ns, where it is needful,) to preſerve the Remains
Religion from being loſt; to keep *the dying*
l, *the dimly-burning flax*, from being *quench'd*;
d to cauſe (as far as Human means can contri-
te to it) *the candle of the Lord*, the glorious Light
the Goſpel, to ſhine out amongſt them in its full
tre. And it is to the end that this laudable
rk may go on the better, that theſe Annual Ser-
ns are appointed, both to encourage thoſe, who
engag'd in it, to perſeverance and diligence,
d alſo to invite others, who have not yet join'd
to be aſſiſting thereto.

Before this excellent deſign was ſet on foot, at
ſame time, that our Trade and Commerce was
creaſing, and we were pleaſing our ſelves with
many advantages daily accruing to this Iſland
om her Colonies and Plantations, and every thing
ok'd well, and promis'd new additions of Wealth
d Power to our native country, it could not but
a melancholy reflection for pious minds, that
eligion, very far from gaining ground propor-
nably, and being in a flouriſhing ſtate, was eve-

ry day declining and wearing away, in some
our new Colonies, to the reproach and dishono
both of the *Christian* and of the *Protestant* nam
But, Blessed be God for it, by the unwearied effo
of this Society, a better turn, and more for our N
tional honour and credit, has been given, since t
Beginning of the *present Century*, to this Affair.

Considering the great demand there has been f
Ministers to officiate in holy things amongst tho
of our planters, who were not in a condition
maintaining or supporting a Ministry themselv
the constant annual expence requir'd to carry
the work without interruption, and how mu
short from the beginning our certain annual
come has been of our disbursements, it may be ma
ter of wonder, that, *in paupertate nostrâ*, *in our p*
verty (to speak with King *David*) so man
and so great difficulties have been so happily s
mounted. But it was the cause of God, and
Christ, and we have great reason to bless and pra
God for the success it hath met with. Our M
sions, numerous as they are, continue, where want
to be maintain'd; No stop has been put to the go
work; and what by our settled yearly Income cou
not possibly be done, the kind friends to this d
sign, some known to us, and some unknown,
their Occasional Donations, have enabled us to d
And, in this, the Society has found it to be Rig
Advice, which King *David* gave to his Son *Solom*
wh

n he was putting him upon a noble and ex-ive work, deſign'd, like this, for the Honour Glory of God; *Ariſe*, ſaies he, *and be doing, the Lord will proſper you.* For thus it runs in *Vulgate*, 1 Chron. xxii. 16. *Surge, et fac, et Dominus tecum.* And this in our caſe has been nd true, to the great ſatisfaction of all who have ark'd in this undertaking; and it muſt be with ordinary pleaſure, that they can reflect with emſelves, that, by their means, Many Thouſands ſouls are at this day fed and refreſh'd with the ine food of the word of *Life*, who muſt other-iſe, according to all Human appearance, have our'd at this time under that terrible kind of *Fa-*, which the Prophet *Amos* deſcribes, Ch. viii. 11. 12. namely, the *Famine of the Word.*

It is one of the miſeries of his People complain'd by the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſ. lxxiv. 9. *We ſee not our ſigns, e is no more any Prophet.* Which words are thus phras'd by a pious and learned Writer. "Thou emeſt to have left us too; and we ſee no token thy Divine preſence with us: —— There is ot ſo much as a Prophet to be found, to give any advice, or ſpeak a word of comfort to s." It was a ſenſe, like this, of the badneſs eir own caſe, that, ſince the inſtitution of this ety, has occaſion'd our people from time to to petition us to ſend them Miſſionaries. Now ſenſible of their own Spiritual Wants, and to

deſire to be refreſh'd with the Divine food of
word, is a mark of perſons, who verily and tr
hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, and of
whom *Chriſt* has pronounced *Bleſſed*, and to wh
he has particularly promis'd, that *they ſhall be*
And if in the carrying on of this work, when our
plies have been at a low ebb, ſtill new Contributors
Benefactors have been found, into whoſe hearts
has put it to be aſſiſting to us (of which this So
ty has not wanted * Experience, and I hope
God, it never will) this looks like ſome degre
accompliſhment of the gracious promiſe of
Lord in that Beatitude. But ſtill, in compar
of the greatneſs of the harveſt, we find, to our
grief, that the Labourers we are enabled to ſend
are by far too few. More of them are needed,
of them are daily petition'd for, and deſir'd of
and it muſt be matter of ſorrow and concern to
piercing our very hearts, that to the requeſts of
many pious and devout perſons all the return
can make is only our warmeſt wiſhes, and our
fervent praiers to God in their behalf. And w
under a ſenſe of their helpleſs and deplorable
dition, with regard to every thing, that is neces
to keep up and preſerve in them their Spiritual
they lay their wants before us, and in the lang

* Amongſt the Benefactions of the preſent Year [1736] is
to this Society of ONE THOUSAND POUNDS from a Perſon,
deſires to be unknown. See the *Abſtract of the Proceedings*
annex'd to this Sermon.

the *Macedonian* to St. *Paul*, in the Viſion, cry nd to us, *Come and help us*, What is the Boon Favour, that they aſk at our hands? Is it not inly This? "Give us the means of knowing the truth, and of working righteouſneſs. Give us what you your ſelves enjoy and are happy in, the opportunity of ſerving God, in an acceptable way, in publick, with one heart and one voice, the comfort of God's Ordinances, the advantage of his Word, the benefit of his Sacraments. Let not the Light of the Goſpel, which ſhines out, with ſo much brightneſs, on your ſelves at home, be hid under a buſhel with reſpect to your Fellow-ſubjects, otherwiſe ſufficiently unhappy, in being divided by the vaſt Ocean from you. Can the Lamp continue to burn, whoſe oil faileth? Can the Natural Body continue any longer its vital functions, when ſupplied no more with nouriſhment? Can the Plant flouriſh, or even ſo much as live, without any kindly air to cheriſh it, without any moiſture to recruit its waſting juices? Then may Religion ſubſiſt and flouriſh in a country, where ſuch helps, as we deſire of you, are wanting."

A requeſt like this, were it to come from ſtrangers and aliens, would ſurely highly deſerve to be tended to. But the perſons, by whom we are petion'd to this effect, have ſtill a ſtronger claim to l the good offices we can do them. They are not

only our Fellow-ſubjects, not only live under the protection of the ſame Government and Laws, but by their toil and labour are daily contributing to the wealth and ſtrength of their Mother-country. Now from what quarter under heaven could they ſo reaſonably expect a ſupply of their Spiritual Wants as from our ſelves?

Our Saviour encourag'd his Diſciples to go and preach the Goſpel to the *Samaritans*, by telling them that there was in that people a good diſpoſition to receive them. *The Fields*, he told them, were *white already to harveſt*. The like encouragement have we at this day to ſend Labourers, in the Spiritual Harveſt, to our Plantations and Colonies.

In this part of our work we have no prejudices in favour of another Religion to ſtruggle with, nor any thing like that prodigious averſion, which the wild and unciviliz'd *Indians* are known to have to every the leaſt ſtep, that is made by others towards reforming and converting them. * It has been obſerv'd of ſome of them in the *Eaſtern* parts of the world, that they were ſo horridly addicted to vice, and had ſuch a rooted hatred to every thing that is good, that they would not ſo much as endure thoſe who did but offer to reprove them for their crimes, or did but endeavour to bring them to Morality and Virtue; nay, [a] that, when they were exhorted to turn *Chriſtians*,

* Jarrici *Hiſtoriæ Inditæ Theſaurus*. L. 1. c. 4.

[a] *Quin et ſanguinem educi venis, et animam corpore exprimi credunt, ubi de Fide ſuſcipiendâ admonentur.* Idem ibid. *Multum hebe-*

ſtians, they thought, that even their blood was ing out of their veins, and that their Inſtructors e forcing their very ſouls out of their bodies. w all ſavage and unciviliz'd peop!e are but too one another upon every part of the Globe. Too ch of this is what has been experienc'd in thoſe *ians* in particular, that border on our Settlements *America*. But this has not hinder'd this Society m trying from time to time, what could be done wards their Converſion, and that of whole Nas of them, as well as of particular perſons. It is ll known, that whenever there has been but the aſt proſpect of a National Converſion, whenever y thing has but promis'd well and look'd a little pefully, they have thought it right to beſtir themves. Miſſionaries, extraordinary, and on purpoſe, ve been ſent to them, to favour, as much as poſſible, the very firſt appearances of a good diſpoſition ongſt them. The Scriptures have been put into r language. Schools have been open'd, and their ildren have been invited and actually taught to them. And repeated attempts have been made win over the grown up perſons amongſt them to faith of *Chriſt*. But after all the pains that have taken with them, and the uſe of the kindeſt hods of treating them, that were poſſible, we not ſay of the *Indians* we have been concern'd with,

nt horum locorum Indi, et immanibus infecti ſceleribus, quibus fit, ve ſit de baptiſmate ſuſcipiendo à nobis audire. Franciſcus Xain epiſtolâ ad Præpoſitum Generalem, anno 1549.

with, as *Acosta* does of others of them (the *Peruvians* he means and the *Mexicans*, *for there is a great deal difference*, he observes, *in Barbarians*, * *Barbarus Barbaro longè præstat)* that we have found them "** "mild and complying people, and easy to be taught. Those whom he thus characterises, tho' they did not quite and in all respects come up to Nations who were perfectly civiliz'd, yet as they had among them some notions of Laws and Government, did not differ so very widely from them; and, as such could more easily be sway'd by reasons, and convinc'd by arguments, and so were more susceptible of Gospel Truths. Whereas it is quite another case when those, whom we would convert, are so very backward in knowledge, as to need to have put into to them the very first rudiments of Reason and the Religion of nature, and have little else beside the Human Shape to distinguish them as Men. A great obstacle this is in our way, and if we would succeed, there is an absolute necessity of removing it. The *Christian* life, is the life of man in its most perfection, and in order to bring those up to so high a pitch, who are so much below the ordinary standard, if we would begin at the right end it must be our first business to endeavour to civilize them, and to make them Men before we make them *Christians*. And to do this must be

* Acosta *De procurandâ Indorum salute*, In Proœmio.
** The same, in his Book *De Naturâ novi Orbis*, in his Dedication to *Philip* II. King of *Spain*.

ork of much time and pains; and if in any good ork there be need of patience and perſeverance, ere is need of it in this. However we very well now, that *Chriſtians* of another perſwaſion have ot been diſcouraged from attempting this good ork, hard and difficult as it is. * One of their e Writers has obſerv'd, that there is no kingdom the world ſo remote, no nation ſo barbarous, here ſome of their people have not preach'd, and ablish'd the *glad tidings* of the Goſpel. It muſt own'd too, that they have not been altogether ſucceſsful herein. And it was remark'd to our advantage by ** another of their Authors, who rote above *an hundred* years ago, that thoſe of he Reformation, our own Countrymen in parti-lar, did not exert their zeal in that way. Now rely great reaſon have we of this Reformed hurch to be at leaſt as much concern'd for the reading of pure and unmixt *Chriſtianity*, as we d others to be for the ſpreading of *Popery*. Let not be ſaid, that ſome men take more pains to the Heathen world with their Legends and Fa-es, and to follow them up therewith, than we to put into their hands ſo good a Book, as the *ible*; the *Bible*, I ſay, which is a Book they are ainly jealous of, and which they do not care for ſting them with: and therefore, tho' we have

* *Hiſtoire Univerſelle des Voyages, faits par mer et par terre. Par* Perier.

** Jarrici *Hiſt. Ind. Theſ.* L. 2. c. 30.

the Hiſtory of *Chriſt* writ by *four* inſpir'd Evangeliſts, yet nothing would ſerve the turn of * one of their great Miſſionaries, who went into the *Eaſtern* parts of the world, but penning a new Goſpel for them, which might ſupport the errors and corruptions of that church; that ſo, with their new Converts, the Belief of the Goſpel it ſelf and the Belief of their groſs Interpolations of it might ſtand and fall together.

We cannot think, that God has brought us to our new Settlements in the neighbourhood of the *Indians*, barely to make us ſpectators of their deplorable condition. The good *Samaritan* in the Goſpel, whom we are commanded to imitate, did a great deal more to the traveller in diſtreſs, to whom the Providence of God had led and conducted him. Nor has God put the poor *Negroes* into our power for no other end but that we might uſe them as ill, as *Pharaoh* did the Children of *Iſrael*, when under a pretence that he might be *better* ſerved by them himſelf, he would not ſuffer them to ſerve *at all* the Lord of Heaven and Earth who made both him and them. But the cauſe of the *Negroes* has been ſo well pleaded by others, who have ſpoken before me on this occaſion, that I do not think myſelf capable of adding any thing to that head.

* *The perſon here meant is* Hieronymus Xavier, *Homo non in vio, ſed Mogorenſi Miſſioni præfectus*; as *Ludovicus de Dieu* has ſerv'd concerning him. One, who was contemporary with *Xav* gives us this account of him; *Miſſioni Mogorenſi jam multos præeſt.* Nicolaus Trigautius, *De Chriſtianâ expeditione apud Sſuſceptâ.* L. V. c. 11.

And now may God put it into the hearts of all perſons, whom we employ in this good work ſpreading the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, our Miſſiona-, our Catechiſts, and our Schoolmaſters, duly conſider with themſelves, how great and mo-ntous an affair they are ſent upon, namely, to ing all that poſſibly they can, to *Repentance un-o Life*; and how much it concerns them, that the ood cauſe of the Goſpel do not ſuffer through any want of care, or zeal, or diſcretion, in thoſe who re to manage it. It is a ſaying of a famous *Spaniſh* Miſſionary, who had ſpent in the *Indies*, that work, no leſs than *ſeventeen* years of his ife; " Give me, ſaies he, but Apoſtolical Men a-" mongſt the *Indians*, and I will anſwer for it, that " amongſt the *Indians*, Apoſtolical Succeſs ſhall not " be wanting."

And to make the labours of thoſe whom we nd abroad ſtill more effectual in gaining over ſouls o *Chriſt*, may not only they themſelves, but all the eople in our Settlements, ſeriouſly and often think ith themſelves, how greatly they may forward is good work by being more eſpecially careful to ow to the *Pagan* world (as, by their ſituation, nd nearneſs to them, they have opportunity of do-g) the Amiableneſs of *Chriſtianity* in the lives of profeſſors. And till it ſhall pleaſe God, once a-n, to bleſs the preachers of his word with the

Joſephus Acoſta, *De procur. Ind. ſalute.* L. 1. c. 18.

Gift of Miracles, may the ſight of the remarka
ſobriety and temperance, of the ſingular juſtice a
equity, of the ſweet meekneſs and gentleneſs,
the admirable kindneſs and charity of *Chriſti*
even raviſh the hearts of the beholders, and
their affections, and operate as ſtrongly upon t
minds, as the Gift of Miracles it ſelf could
And by ſuch Violence as this, added to our
ſtructions and perſwaſions (but by no other) may
compell them to come in.

THE END.